

Working for  
OUR community

Toni  
Harp

Aid for Towns in the 10<sup>th</sup> Senate District

The beginning of our state’s economic recovery has already had a positive impact on our state budget. This year, we ended up with a small surplus and the General Assembly has decided to invest much of the additional money into aid to municipalities to help pay for local schools and to hold down property taxes.

Pequot & Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$12,250,114
Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$37,167,779
Town Aid Road Fund (TAR)	\$595,472
Total Education Grants	\$180,600,895
Local Capital Improvement Projects	\$2,363,261
Total	\$232,977,521

*This funding represents an increase of \$3,148,530 over last year’s total.*

QUALITY CHILDCARE

The state has recently approved \$1,117,000 to aid in the construction of a new childcare facility on Edgewood Avenue in New Haven. The new building has space for 50 children and will also be a place where individuals can receive training to become child care workers.

REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN NEW HAVEN

For the last several years I have been an advocate for the construction of a downtown campus for Gateway Community College and for state support of moving the Long Wharf Theatre to a downtown location. These efforts and those of my fellow New Haven legislators and the City administration achieved success with the announcement that the state will provide \$140 million for Gateway, \$30 million toward construction of the new theatre and \$10 million for additional downtown parking. The relocation of the Long Wharf Theatre to downtown will make this valuable New Haven cultural institution more accessible, and consolidating the two existing Gateway campuses is an important part of our effort to ensure that quality educational opportunities are available to local residents.

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR WEST HAVEN

This year the General Assembly passed legislation that will provide tax relief to West Haven residents. The Veteran’s Administration (VA) Hospital is tax-exempt and West Haven does not collect property taxes from the VA. Beginning in 2007, the state will reimburse the town for part of the lost tax revenue by including the VA Hospital in the PILOT program.

INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

School children in the New Haven region will have extra opportunities due to the legislature’s action to provide funding to help build the city’s newest charter school, Elm City. The legislature also passed a law that allows the Amistad School to increase its enrollment by 50 students.

SUMMER 2004

Dear Friend:

Recently the Connecticut General Assembly completed its 2004 legislative session. I am pleased to report that we were able to pass important legislation to keep Connecticut a great place to live and work.

Through hard work and dedication, we restored our citizen’s faith in government, a faith badly damaged by scandal. We also brought property tax relief to our over-burdened taxpayers by increasing the property tax credit on your state income tax; started the crucial task of repairing the safety net for the state’s poorest of the poor; and made major strides in protecting our air and water through important environmental legislation.

These successes were achieved during a session made difficult by the controversy surrounding former Governor Rowland that threatened to distract and polarize the General Assembly. The House Select Committee of Inquiry deserves praise for the fair, bipartisan way in which they conducted their business. And, with Rowland’s resignation, this chapter in Connecticut politics closes.

I hope you find this newsletter informative. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

*Toni Nathaniel Harp*

Toni Nathaniel Harp  
State Senator, 10th District



From your State Senator

Toni  
HARP

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I’m proud  
to represent the  
10th Senatorial  
district which  
includes the  
communities of  
New Haven  
and West Haven

For my latest news, visit  
www.senatedems.state.ct.us/Harp.html

State Senator  
**Toni Nathaniel Harp**

CHAIRMAN: Appropriations  
MEMBER: Executive & Legislative Nominations;  
Program Review & Investigations

Representing New Haven and West Haven

**The Press Room**  
Senator Harp’s corner of our Press Room includes recent press releases and his Press Kit.

**Legislation**  
A list of bills introduced by Senator Harp during the 2004 session can be found on the General Assembly Web site.

**Newsletters**  
Senator Harp’s recent constituent newsletters (Adobe PDF format).  
Winter District-Wide (549k)  
Education Funding (128k)  
Education (Bilingual) (103k)

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**ABOUT SENATOR HARP**

State Senator Toni Nathaniel Harp is currently serving her sixth

**Look & Listen**

VIDEO

PRSRT STD  
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STATE SENATOR  
TONI NATHANIEL HARP



In June, I was pleased to meet at the Capitol with seniors from the Common Ground School in New Haven.

Continuing to Work  
for Connecticut's Future



EXPANDING BENEFITS TO VETERANS

The Rocky Hill Veterans' Home provides housing, long-term health care, educational services, vocational testing and counseling, rehabilitation and other services to 500 needy veterans. Unfortunately, there are others who could use these services. This session we passed a bill that would increase the number of veterans eligible for admission to the state Veterans' Home and also increased the number of veterans eligible for burial in the state veterans' cemetery. For more complete information and eligibility criteria, please contact the Department of Veterans' Affairs toll free at (800) 550-0000 ext. 5893.

MORE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Easing congestion on Connecticut's highways and promoting the use of public transportation is one of our state's priorities. Last year we passed landmark legislation to augment our public transportation infrastructure. This year, to continue our commitment to easing congestion and helping commuters get off the roadways we passed legislation authorizing the use of \$25 million in special transportation bonds. These bonds will be used to purchase new cars for the Metro-North fleet, allowing more people to get on board with public transportation.

HELPING PROVIDERS OF COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

Private providers play an integral role in our community services infrastructure. In addition to the services provided by state employees, Connecticut contracts with private providers for children's and adult mental health counseling, for group homes for persons with mental retardation, and for other support services. Operating on tight budgets, private providers historically have not been able to offer their employees competitive wages and benefit packages. New legislation requires that we compare the increases given to private providers to the salary increases given to state employees who perform similar services. It also requires that, when crafting new budgets, increases provided to those state employees be considered as appropriate increases for private provider agencies as well.

EXPANSION OF HATE CRIMES

In an effort to protect people with disabilities and a gender identity other than that of their biological make-up, we passed legislation classifying crimes committed against these individuals as hate crimes. Crimes committed maliciously and with the intent to intimidate or harass a person because of their actual or perceived disability or gender expression are now subject to more serious penalties under the hate crimes statute. The freedom and independence of all our citizens are basic human rights that should be protected.

CHILDHOOD NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

In the last decade, obesity rates have doubled among American children. Childhood obesity, mainly caused by poor diet and inactivity, is associated with diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure and sleep apnea. This session, we took action by putting an increased focus on nutrition and activity in our schools. Beginning this fall, schools must provide lunch periods of at least twenty minutes daily and they will also need to have low fat foods and drinks available for purchase. In addition, elementary schools must provide a period of physical exercise in every full school day. Schools are a great place to start reinforcing healthy diet and physical activity messages.

ENACTING PRISON REFORMS AND REDUCING RECIDIVISM

Over the last 10 years, Connecticut's prison population has increased dramatically. Currently, our prisons are nearing capacity, with some Connecticut inmates being housed out-of-state. Continuing to pay other states to incarcerate our prisoners is only a temporary solution to a long-term problem. In an effort to enact meaningful reforms, we passed legislation this session aimed at reducing recidivism and rehabilitating offenders. The legislation is substantial and includes numerous provisions targeted at different aspects of the overcrowding problem. One stipulation requires numerous state agencies to collaborate to develop a comprehensive reentry strategy for inmates returning to the community to ease their transition and provide them with the necessary skills to live independently and honestly. Another aspect of the solution would allow the Department of Corrections (DOC) to transfer inmates who are granted parole and are within 18 months of their parole release date to a public or private nonprofit halfway house, where they can assimilate into the community while still being under the jurisdiction of the DOC.

SAFER ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINES

Connecticut is in need of an electric transmission line upgrade, particularly in the southwestern part of the state, because there are simply not enough lines currently to service all residents. Although there are plans to build new transmission lines, they must be constructed in a safe manner making people's health and safety a priority. That is why we passed legislation that will strengthen our laws regulating what is required in an application to build such lines. This legislation will require that an application to build an electric or gas transmission line must include an assessment of the impact of the electromagnetic fields the proposed facility may produce, and perhaps most importantly, the bill requires that certain transmission lines located near residential areas be buried, if feasible. The applicant must also provide a map outlining the proximity of the proposed project to schools, day care facilities, and playgrounds. This legislation will help our state meet its energy needs, while protecting the health and livelihood of its residents.



*New transmission lines must be constructed in a safe manner making people's health and safety a priority.*

PROTECTION OF LONG ISLAND SOUND

Long Island Sound is one of Connecticut's greatest natural resources. In the 2002 and 2003 legislative sessions, we passed moratoriums on the consideration of any application for electric power lines or gas pipelines to be built underneath the Sound. During this period, a task force consisting of representatives from state agencies and other interested parties developed a comprehensive assessment and plan. This requires evaluating the need for future energy proposals and the impact that these projects may have on the ecology of the Sound. This session, we passed legislation extending the moratorium another year until June 2005. This will provide adequate time to further analyze the task force's recommendations on how best to balance the state's energy needs, while protecting the Sound.